Opening of Qutub Minarto public

1973. SHRI EKANATH K.THAKUR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the first floor of the Qutub Minar was slated to be opened to the public by May, 2004 but the opening is becoming a remote possibility each day;

(b) whether it is a fact that according to the Director, ASI, its implementation is difficult;

(c) if so, the reasons for delay in opening Qutub Minar to public; and

(d) the action taken or propose to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir. However, a decision in principle has been taken to open the Qutub Minar for the public upto the first floor.

(b) and (c) Adequate security and safety measures need to be ensured before a final decision is taken.

(d) Necessary repairs and other works relating to security and safety of Qutub Minar are in progress.

Indo-Pak Cultural relations

1974. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a two-day session has been held in Delhi on the 3rd and 4th August, 2004 between the Culture Secretaries of India and Pakistan on the promotion of friendly exchanges;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any decision has been taken to enhance the pilgrim travel to temples, mosques and Gurudwaras in both the countries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what other matters and issues have been discussed and decisions taken during this two-day session?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Talks between India and Pakistan on "Promotion of Friendly Exchanges in Various Fields" were held in New Delhi on August 3-4, 2004 within the framework of the Composite Dialogue. The Indian delegation was led by Secretary (Culture) and the Pakistan delegation led by Mr. Jalil Abbas, Secretary, Ministry of Minorities, Tourism, Culture and Youth Affairs.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Views were exchanged on liberalizing the visa regime and expanding the scope of the 1974 bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines by increasing the number of pilgrims and shrines on both sides.

(e) Both sides made wide ranging proposals for promoting friendly exchanges and cooperation in the fields of art, culture, archaeology, education, science and technology, youth affairs and sports, media and tourism.

Celebration of birth of Khalsa

1975. SHRI TARLOCHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the grant sanctioned by Government for celebration of 300th year of the birth of Khalsa in 1999;

(b) the details of the schemes under which this money was spent;

(c) the money lying unutilised out of Rs.100 crore; and

(d) the scheme under which this unspent money is to be utilised?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (d) For commemoration of 300th year of birth of Khalsa, the Government had made a total allocation of Rs. 77.95 crore till financial year 2003-04. Out of this, an amount of Rs. 65.58 crore was released to State Governments, Universities and Non-Governmental Organisations for creation of permanent assets and for undertaking various programmes. A list of major projects on which funds were spent is given in the Statement.